

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 EB-07

COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /077 W

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FM AMCONSUL CALGARY

TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1840

UNCLAS CALGARY 517

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJ: REACTION TO QUEBEC ELECTION

1. MAGNITUDE OF PARTY QUEBECOIS VICTORY CAME AS SURPRISE TO MOST ALBERTANS. LOCAL PRESS AND RADIO ATTRIBUTED PQ PICTORY TO UNPOPULARITY OF PREMIER BOURASSA, THE LIBERAL PARTY'S ALIENATION OF QUEBEC'S ENGLISH-SPEAKING AND ETHNIC COMMUNITY MINORITIES, AND EFFECTIVE EXPLOITATION BY PQ OF CORRUPTION ISSUE. MEDIA WERE UNANIMOUS IN THEIR DESCRIPTION OF ELECTION AS REPUDIATION OF BOURASSA GOVERNMENT AND NOT AS A VICTORY FOR SEPARATISM.

2. NUMBER SENIOR BUSINESSMEN AND TOP UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY OFFICIALS EXPRESSED PRIVATELY TO REPORTING OFFICER THEIR RESERVATIONS ABOUT PQ'S CAPACITY TO RUN A GOVERNMENT AND ITS ABILITY TO AVERT COLLAPSE OF QUEBEC ECONOMY. ONE DIRECTOR OF MAJOR MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATION INDICATED THAT HIS COMPANY WOULD NOW BE TRANSFERRING ITS HEADQUARTERS PERSONNEL AND BANKING OPERATIONS TO TORONTO. MORE OPTIMISTIC BUSINESSMEN WERE PREDICTING ADOPTION OF "WAIT AND SEE" ATTITUDE WHILE PESSIMISTIC OBSERVERS FORECAST LARGE SCALE CAPITAL FLIGHT AND DEPARTURE OF MAJOR CORPORATIONS FROM MONTREAL AREA.

3. SOME CALGARY OBSERVERS COMMENTED THAT RESOUNDING PQ

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VICTORY MIGHT HAVE BEEN BEST POSSIBLE RESULT ARGUING THAT

SEPARATIST ISSUE WOULD NOW GET FULL AIRING AND QUEBEC'S POSITION IN CONFEDERATION COULD BE SETTLED ONCE AND FOR ALL. CONSERVATIVE BUSINESSMEN AND ACADEMICS FEARED THAT RADICAL ELEMENTS IN QUEBEC WOULD SEEK TO PRODUCE THE SORT OF CHAOS AND DISRUPTION THAT WOULD FORCE PROVINCE OUT OF THE CONFEDERATION. DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT NOTE WAS SOUNDED BY PRESIDENT OF CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON PUBLIC POLICY WHO EXPRESSED APPREHENSION THAT LEVESQUE GOVERNMENT MIGHT DRIVE QUEBEC INTO THE HANDS OF THE AMERICANS.

4. CALGARY PRESS CHARACTERIZED ELECTION RESULTS AS SOBERING AND A CAUSE FOR CANADIANS TO REFLECT THOUGHTFULLY ON MEANING OF CONFEDERATION. CALGARY HERALD EDITORIALIZED THAT "SEPARATISM IS SIMPLY NOT GOING AWAY" AND LAMENTED THAT BURDEN OF BATTLE WITH THE PQ COULD NOW BE IN THE DOUBTFUL HANDS OF THE TRUDEAU GOVERNMENT.  
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